The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1547 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1940 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 30, NO. 49

AFL Pledges National Defense Aid and Help to Great Britain; Will Protect Labor Standards and Save Social Gains; Green, Meany and Council Re-Elected As Convention Closes

FACING the FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

Flying back from New Orleans to Washington, after the close of the 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, we were held up a half hour at the Atlanta airport. While we were waiting there, a bit impatiently, we discovered a radio program was in progress and the next minute the radio reporter came up to us with a microphone in his hand and proceeded to interview us. Naturally, we talked about the convention. But in the few minutes we were on the air we were unable, we fear, to give a complete report. So now that we're back home and settled down again and can view the proceedings retrospectively, we shall make another attempt with the same question and answer method.

Q.—What were the outstanding actions of the convention?

A.—Most important, we think, was the unanimous declaration of a broad, patriotic policy with regard to national defense. The convention pledged the members of the American Federation of Labor to cooperate fully with the Government in the completion of the strongest possible preparedness program. It voiced a willingness to make any sacrifices that were reasonable or necessary to attain this goal. A wholesome spirit of loyalty and self-discipline was predominant. There will be no American Federation of Labor strikes on defense projects if there is any way to avoid them. That was the consensus of opinion among the delegates voiced by President Green. And Government representatives attending the convention confirmed the fact there have been no such strikes to date.

Labor and Democracy

Q.—What was the convention's attitude toward the war in Europe?

A.—It condemned whole-heartedly and without reserve the totalitarian aggressors and pledged labor to support the cause of democracy. The convention heard an inspiring address from Sir Walter Citrine on how British workers have rallied to the cause of their country. It went on record as pledging American labor's support to our Government's policy of extending every possible aid to Great Britain, short of war. There were no Communists in the convention to oppose this policy. It was a 100 per cent American gathering and it acted in a patriotic American way.

Q.—Did the convention endorse President Green's leadership?

A.—It did so in the most spontaneous and complete way. President Green was re-elected by acclamation for his seventeenth consecutive term as head of the American Federation of Labor. The convention voted him and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany an $8,000 increase in salary each, as a token of recognition for services well rendered. The feeling at this American Federation of Labor convention was in marked contrast to the CIO convention where tearful resignations and retirements were the order of the day.

The Prospects of Peace

Q.—Did the convention do anything to promote labor peace?

A.—It did everything possible. The convention received a message from President Roosevelt urging a renewed attempt to bring about unity. President Green promptly replied that the committee representing the American Federation of Labor was ready to meet any time and anywhere with CIO representatives for the purpose of bringing about a settlement. The convention unanimously endorsed this action. President Green appealed to those unions in the CIO which have become disillusioned to come back home to the Federation and he promised them a hearty and generous welcome. He warned that public opinion in this country will not stand for labor leadership which blocks the obvious desire of the workers of this country for a reunited labor movement.

Q.—Then what are the prospects for labor peace during the coming year?

A.—It is hard to say at this moment. The left-wing element in the CIO squelched every move at their convention to bring about resumption of peace negotiations. The plea was made by the ex-CIO leader that the dual movement is too weak now to consider peace. This was a specious plea. But the new leader of the CIO echoed it, nevertheless. He "promised" the CIO delegates that he would not rush into new peace negotiations. That was a fine "promise" for a labor leader to make. On the surface, it does not seem likely that the CIO will make any peace overtures in the immediate future. But there are strong and discordant undercurrents within the CIO which may compel action. The CIO is undoubtedly weak. But unless it does come back to the American Federation of Labor it will become much weaker. Conflicting pressures from the right and left wing groups threaten to tear it apart. As a whole, it has become thoroughly discredited in our nation. Its public standing is extremely low. Its political influence is nil. Its legislative influence works in reverse. As a labor organization, it is completely non-existent in most parts of the country.. Unless the CIO quickly arranges to come back to the American Federation of Labor, it is likely to disintegrate entirely.

Dubinsky Welcomed Home By AFL, Declares He Is Happy to Be Back

New Orleans, La.—Cordial greetings and a hearty "Welcome Home" were extended to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union by the 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor.

The convention unanimously adopted a Resolutions Committee report which said:

"Their return to the family of the American Federation of Labor will have a far-reaching influence upon other organizations not now affiliated with us and should hasten the day and make easier those negotiations which we fervently hope will soon be resumed having for their purpose the unifying of the American trade union movement.

"We welcome the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and extend to them without reserve the hand of friendship, fellowship and fraternity."

In discussing this report, President Green told the convention:

"This international union possesses a broad, progressive outlook on life. It is constantly expanding its activities. It has made a record of which we can all be proud.

"We hope that others who have left us have now become sufficiently disillusioned to see the light. We hope they will be courageous enough, as was the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, to take the step, to take the road onward and come home to the American Federation of Labor during the coming year."

Responding to this warm welcome, David Dubinsky, President of the I.L.G.W.U., said:

"We deeply appreciate the spirit of the fine remarks made by you, Mr. President, on the matter of our return to the American Federation of Labor. We are sincerely grateful for the fine trade union hospitality extended to us by all the constructive forces in our movement.

"I want to say to you, Mr. President and delegates, just as you have expressed your happiness and your gratitude at our return and your regret at our having been out of the A. F. of L. for a time, we were not happy from the very first moment when we disassociated ourselves from the American Federation of Labor, and we were not at all happy during the entire time we were out, because we realized from the very beginning that there was no justification for a division in the labor movement, although we desired a more progressive and militant attitude toward organized and unorganized men and women and toward the method of organization, as well.

"John L. Lewis stated that we picked 'the easy way.' I say it wasn't the easy way when we were suspended from the American Federation of Labor, nor was it the easy way when we decided to rejoin. I rather considered it a wise way and not an easy way, and I hope others will regard it in the same spirit.

"There is one remark that John L. Lewis made on the floor of the C.I.O. that I believe was the truest statement he has yet made. He said that the C.I.O. is too weak today in order to effect peace. There was a time when the C.I.O. was stronger than it is today. When they were stronger spiritually, morally and organizationally, peace was blocked because peace was not desired, and I believe that even today, when the C. I. O. is weaker, every effort should be made toward uniting the labor movement.

"Just as the gambler who, when he wins at the start continues to gamble and does not stop even when he is losing, and when he keeps on losing he wants to make up his losses, so those people refuse to recognize that they will keep on losing, that they will never regain what they have lost.

"So I say that peace in the labor movement is more essential than gambling with the lives and the welfare of the American laboring people by the continuance of this unnecessary strife. As I have said before, there are and will continue to be disagreements, but on behalf of my associates and the membership of our union, I wish to express our joy and our great satisfaction that ultimately, though it took us a little longer, we have rejoined the American Federation of Labor, where we belong and where we want to be. And should we have any disagreements in the future we will not hesitate to give expression to our opinions, here, in this open forum. It is our sincere hope that we will work harmoniously and cooperate with each other to the end that we will attain a united labor movement for the welfare of the workers of our nation."

JOBS AND PAYROLLS RISE IN WISCONSIN

Madison, Wis.—The State Industrial Commission reported that 27,200 more workers were employed by Wisconsin manufacturers in October, 1940, than in October, 1939. Weekly payrolls in October were also more than a million dollars above the corresponding total for last year.

The State had 242,000 industrial wage earners last month, and 215,200 in October, 1939.

Archbishop Rummel Gives Delegates Inspiring Message On Labor's Aims In Closing Sessions.

New Orleans, La.—One of the outstanding addresses delivered to the delegates attending the 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor was made during the closing sessions by Most Reverend Joseph F. Rummel, Archbishop of New Orleans.

The Archbishop was given an ovation by the delegates who were extremely pleased by the enlightened views he expressed on the aims and purposes of organized labor and their close relationship with the work of the Church.

Highlights of the Archbishop's address follow:

"Your task as I visualize it has risen higher than the original struggle for reasonable wage and hour scale, it embraces preeminently three definite objectives: the just recognition of human rights, the constructive development of social welfare and the promotion of the security and prosperity throughout the nation.

"It is your task first of all to promote the recognition of certain fundamental rights which are inherent in every human being. These rights based upon the dignity of each individual man by reason of his spiritual nature and destiny, and by reason of the gifts of intelligence and freedom wherewith God has endowed him. Let us bear in mind that this nature and these gifts antecede any act of a government, or of a ruler or of any group of men. They are a part of the plan of the Creator, Who deigned to make man according to His own image and likeness.

"This fundamental principle teaches us to regard a human being not as a chattel to be bartered for or with, nor as a cog in a wheel to be inserted or discarded at will, nor as a gadget in apiece of machinery to be carefully guarded only as long as it is found useful, nor as an automaton or robot to be operated as a machine upon the touch of a button or the throwing of a switch.

"This human individual must be looked upon as a wonderfully complicated being made up of human flesh, human blood, human feelings, human emotions, human aspirations, human ideals and human potentialities, a being fitted indeed in the mind of the Creator to be the king of the universe.

"For this individual you have a right and a duty to claim not only the means of a bare existence but also of the enjoyment of health, security and happiness over the entire period of his life. For him must also be vindicated certain definite rights that arise from the fact that he is essentially a social being with natural tendencies towards association with others, involving in particular the establishment of a family and home. This involves on his part responsibilities for the support, the education, the preparation for life and a proper participation in the enjoyments of life for those who depend upon him in a social atmosphere. To meet these social responsibilities he must be given adequate opportunity and aid. In this connection it is well to note that birth control and other social evils are in no small measure traceable to a failure on the part of human society to grasp or recognize the full implications of man's social rights and needs.

"Your Federation of Labor has also a very important mission in the field of social welfare. Working men and working women are integral parts of community life whether it exist in the scattered rural populations of the countryside, or in the more concentrated atmosphere of the town and the city, or whether we view it from the larger angle of the state and nation.

"In every community, large and small, there is need of building up a physical structure in keeping with the progress of civilization. Indeed the building up of such a structure is a part but not the whole of the progress that civilization achieves. There is a still greater need of building up in every community a definite moral structure based upon self-respect, decency and righteousness, in which lie the elements of mutual security and peace. In every community there must also be created facilities for a definite cultural, spiritual and religious life, which contribute vitally to the morale of the community.

"Consideration for social welfare necessarily looks into the distant future to make wise provision against the exigencies of illness, unemployment, periods of depression and the inevitable twilight of life that comes with advancing years. In making these provisions there is indeed need of cooperation between the State, the employer and the worker. The task must be visualized, planned and sustained as definitely a three cornered responsibility, but on his part the worker must be trained to habits of self-respect and thrift so that he may participate willingly and generously according to his resources. And this again is a part of the great task that lies before you as an organization of working people."

AFL President Pledges To Work for Labor Peace And Democracy

New Orleans, La.—In accepting re-election by acclamation at the 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor for his seventeenth consecutive annual term as President of the A.F. of L., William Green made this heartfelt response to the cheering delegates:

"I again accept your call to service, and I pledge to you in this great hall this afternoon the best I have in strength of body and mind. I can give no more than I have and all of it, whatever it may be, shall be given to you and in service to the American Federation of Labor.

"Years of service as President of the American Federation of Labor serve to increase my deep sense of responsibility. I suffer under no illusions when at each annual convention of the American Federation of Labor I have been called to lead and serve you. I know it means service of the highest order. I know it means the giving of all I have during twelve months of the year. It is not the easy way of life. But who can resist the appeal made by such a noble body of men and women, as well as those they represent?

"This is a great historic convention, one of which we may be exceedingly proud. It is representative of the largest membership of the American Federation of Labor, the largest ever reached. This convention is offered as an answer to those who have challenged the existence of our movement, who have declared they were going to destroy it. It is a live, vital, aggressive force in American life.

"I look into the coming year with hope, the highest hope and expectations. I am neither a defeatist nor a fatalist. I believe there exists in the hearts and minds of labor, the men who work in the mines, the mills and the factories, those who are drafted into the service of the United States, a deep consuming desire for peace and unity within the labor movement. And I do not believe that their hopes can be disappointed nor their desires set aside. And so, apprised of that state of mind, and understanding it as I believe I do, I will with all charity devote my service and my efforts toward bringing about peace in the labor movement during the coming year.

"I say to you that I regard public opinion as the most vital force in American life, and I believe the time will come ere long when no man can stand up and defy public opinion in America.

"In addition, I shall give all I have to carry on the organization of labor among the unorganized, to develop here in America an administrative policy for the American Federation of Labor that invites and secures the support of public opinion. I shall do all that I can in the service of my country's mobilization, the material and moral strengthening of labor in the support of the Government's preparedness program. I shall appeal to the heart and soul and consciousness of the American people to stand by the Government in the execution of our defense program so that no marauder will ever set foot on American soil.

"And in addition to that, as we enter the new year of 1941, I want to sound a new note of victory—victory for democracy in all of the world, victory for righteousness and the triumph of justice—victory for the American Federation of Labor.

"After our work is completed and we turn our faces homeward, we shall return with a sturdy step and a renewed determination that in the conflict with those who within our movement and those without, we will make sure of eternal triumph for the American Federation of Labor.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this great honor you have again conferred upon me, and I renew in your solemn presence my pledge of devotion and loyalty and the best of service I can give to this great movement you represent. I sincerely thank you."

Convention Condemns Racketeering; Votes Action To End Such Abuses

New Orleans, La.—Sweeping condemnation of racketeering in labor organizations was expressed by the 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor. The convention unanimously adopted a report outlining this course of action to deal with racketeering:

1—All national and international unions affiliated with the AFL were advised to adopt rules or Constitutional amendments embodying appropriate provisions for adequate disciplinary action against any officers or members found guilty of betraying their trust or having used their official position for personal or illegal gain.

2—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor was authorized to "apply all of its influence" for corrective action if any union "seemingly evades its responsibility" in acting on its own accord.

The text of the convention declaration follows:

"Your committee is in complete accord with that portion of the Executive Council's report which declares that it is our purpose to maintain a high moral standard in our trade union movement, and that we definitely disavow racketeering and gangsterism, and that we want none of it in our movement.

"Your committee, without qualification, condemns the action of trade union officials who use their position of trust, confidence and high responsibility, for the purpose of exploiting those whom they represent, the employers and the public, for their private gain.

"While such conduct is reprehensible, and in every way injurious to our trade union movement as a whole, we direct attention to the fact that a far larger number of men in the professions, in public life, and in business, have manifested criminal tendencies and been found guilty.

"We submit with pride the record of honesty and integrity of the thousands of trade union officials as a whole, either in local, state or national capacity. The record for integrity which they have established with their membership, with public officials and with employers, is a just source of gratification.

"Those who make use of instances where trade union officials have erred, for the purpose of condemning the trade union movement and its leadership as a whole, are guilty of grave social harm.

"There is a direct moral responsibility on the part of the trade union movement to keep its ranks free from every tinge of racketeering and gangsterism. The membership of our trade union movement, and the public, have the right to expect that the leaders of labor will be men of unquestioned personal integrity.

"Your committee believes that declarations by this convention to be effective, must be accompanied by provisions which will place the American Federation of Labor in a position where the subject under consideration can be dealt with in an effective manner.

"In so doing we must keep in mind that the American Federation of Labor is a federation of self-governing national and international unions who have been guaranteed their right to self-government, which includes their election and selection of officers and control over their conduct.

"On the other hand the national and international organizations have the power and the obligation to protect the integrity of the trade union movement by the enforcement of disciplinary action which will safeguard the good name of their own organization, and the reputation of the American Federation of Labor.

"We direct attention to the well established policy of the American Federation of Labor in connection with the directly affiliated local organizations. Whenever charges have been filed against officers of local and federal labor unions and investigation has shown the charges well founded, such officers have been removed from their positions of trust, and when necessary to maintain the integrity of trade unionism, offending organizations have had their charter annulled.

"In lieu of Resolution No. 32, and in support of the Executive Council's report, your committee recommends that all national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor be advised to adopt rules or amendments to their constitution or where no provision now prevails embodying appropriate provisions for adequate disciplinary action against any of their officers and/or members who may have been found guilty of betraying the trust reposed in them, or of having used their official position for personal and illegal gain, who have been or may be convicted of such acts which cast discredit upon the labor movement.

"That whenever the Executive Council has valid reason to believe that a trade union official is guilty of any such offense, and the National or International Union in question seemingly evades its responsibility, the Executive Council shall be authorized to apply all of its influence to secure such action as will correct the situation.

"The foregoing recommendations must not be construed as preventing any person from rehabilitating himself.

"Attention is also called to a certain type of gangsterism which requires vigorous action on the part of the trade union movement.

"There have been men of ill repute who, in some instances, have succeeded, through stealth and armed force, in securing control of existing local unions, or in organizing new ones, using the power they have acquired for illegal purposes. This is a most difficult evil to eradicate. It calls for the application of every means available."

Convention Urges Labor Peace, Condemns Anti-Trust Prosecutions and Increases Per Capita Tax.

New Orleans, La.—The 60th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor was brought to a triumphant conclusion here with constructive action on a large number of important resolutions and the re-election of President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and the entire Executive Council.

The convention voted unanimously to give every possible cooperation to the Government in the national defense program but pledged resistance to any attempts to undermine or destroy labor standards.

Other outstanding convention actions included:

1—Full endorsement of the policy of giving Great Britain all assistance, short of war, in her fight for life against the totalitarian aggressors.

2—Acceptance of President Roosevelt's plea for labor peace with the assurance that the AFL is ready to resume negotiations any time and anywhere and with the authorization for the AFL peace committee to enter conferences with CIO representatives whenever it is accorded an opportunity to do so.

3—Adoption of a two cents per month per member tax on national and international unions for the coming year, ending the one-cent assessment which has been in force for the past three years, with provision for a financial investigation to determine what the revenue requirements of the American Federation of Labor are so that a permanent basis of income can be established by the next convention.

4—Definition of the powers of the Executive Council with regard to suspension of national and international unions in a Constitutional amendment which provides that such powers may be exercised only when two or more unions enter a conspiracy for the formation of a dual movement.

5—Sweeping condemnation of racketeering and gangsterism in labor organizations with a recommendation that all national and international unions adopt provisions for disciplinary action against officers or members found guilty of betraying their trust and with authorization to the AFL Executive Council to "apply all of its influence" for corrective action whenever it has valid reason to believe that a union "seemingly evades its responsibility" in this respect.

6—Renewed demands for adoption by Congress of the AFL amendments to the National Labor Relations Act, accompanied by expressions of gratification over the appointment of Dr. Harry A. Millis to succeed Board Chairman J. Warren Madden and the housecleaning of left-wing CIO sympathizers from the NLRB staff.

7—Sharp condemnation of Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold's attempts to prosecute trade-unions under the anti-trust laws.

8—Endorsement of the 30-hour week as organized labor's ultimate goal and solution for unemployment with the proviso, however, that the AFL will be ready to make any needful sacrifices to speed the completion of the national defense program.

9—Extension of the boycott against German and Japanese goods and services.

10—A declaration deploring the fact that the AFL was not recognized by giving one of its representatives a place on the National Defense Advisory Commission and urging that handling of labor disputes be left to the Conciliation Service of the Department of Labor without interference by other Federal agencies.

Arms and Money Are Urged by Bevin To Aid Britain's War For Democracy

New York, N. Y.—Appealing to those "who are equally determined with us to maintain the great principles of liberty of thought and action," Ernest Bevin, British Minister of Labor and Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, addressed a message to "all who accept these principles as their way of life" to "rally to the fullest possible extent in support of those who are actually in the battle-line," in a communication to Matthew Woll, President of the League for Human Rights, Freedom and Democracy.

His message expressed the firm determination of the British people to continue their struggle in the face of their terrible sufferings. It reads as follows:

"Present struggle for the maintenance of democracy and the right to use reason as against force in the conduct of human affairs should not have to be borne by one nation or commonwealth. It involves the fundamental rights and liberties of the human being, and all who accept these principles as their way of life should rally to the fullest possible extent in support of those who are actually in the battle-line.

"The future progress of labor absolutely depends upon the success of British arms. We are willingly standing up to the terror of the ruthless aggression of our enemy who seeks to break the democratic spirit within us by the murder of our women and children. It is a matter for those not in the fighting lines but who are equally determined with us to maintain the great principles of liberty of thought and action to determine how best they can help, and they must satisfy their consciences as to whether they are withholding anything in money, material, or sympathy.

"At the moment of this great crisis my message would be therefore to every lover of liberty throughout the world: Pour in your arms, your money, your effort to support those who willingly risk their lives to preserve the soul of mankind."

AFL TO GIVE DINNER IN HONOR OF CITRINE

Washington, D. C—Sir Walter Citrine, general secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, will be the guest of honor Tuesday, December 10th at a dinner to be given by the American Federation of Labor, at the Willard Hotel here.

The address which Sir Walter will deliver is expected to deal with the European war and the role in it of the British labor movement. Members of the Cabinet and Congress have been invited to attend.

Mr. Citrine came to the United States from London recently after a perilous crossing. He was an outstanding speaker at the recent American Federation of Labor convention in New Orleans.

R. B. WATTS APPOINTED COUNSEL OF LABOR BOARD

Washington, D. C.—The National Labor Relations Board announced the appointment of Robert B. Watts, formerly associate general counsel, as its counsel to succeed Charles Fahy, now Assistant Solicitor General of the United States. Three other appointments will follow to fill places of officials who resigned when Dr. Harry A. Millis was appointed to succeed J. Warren Madden on the board.

Mr. Watts, a graduate of the Yale Law School, served as Chief Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York before being appointed to the NLRB in 1934. He has been a critic of the administration of the Labor Board's functions which came under the direction of Nathan Witt, who recently resigned as secretary as a result of Mr. Madden's not being re-appointed.

1941 AFL CONVENTION TO MEET IN SEATTLE

New Orleans, La.—The delegates to the sixtieth convention of the American Federation of Labor here selected Seattle, Wash., as the city in which the 1941 convention of the Federation will be held. In citing the advantages of Seattle, Delegate James A. Taylor of the Washington State Federation of Labor said:

"We invite you to come to our State, and to a city where the building trades have had a 6-hour day and a 5-day week for over six years, and many of our organizations have brought about that short hour day; a city where the movement knows how to cooperate and where every organization in our industries works together and brings about a condition for the entire industry. We ask you to come out and look at the greatest project in the world where 10,500,000 cubic feet of concrete has been placed in the Coulee Dam and where we signed a contract three years ago whereby every organization on that dam has been organized under the American Federation of Labor."

NEW YORK JOB BUREAU GETS WORK FOR 38,057

Albany, N. Y.—The New York State Employment Service reported that during October jobs totaling 38,057 were filled in public and private employment, of which 36,294 were in private industry. The gain over October of last year was 66 per cent.